

183 Free Stickers Inside! ★ 2 Fall Posters You'll Love

americangirl.com

September/October 2008

American Girl

26 ways
to show your
team spirit

* **Make Halloween
crafts!**

* **How to handle
hair** hassles

* **Good advice
from older girls**

Plus
What to do
when **you**
feel left out

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See AG Online!

Visit "Fun for Girls" at
americangirl.com

for more magazine fun!

Always get a parent's permission
before surfing the Web or giving out
your full name, address, or any
other personal info.

Paint a Pumpkin

No carving's necessary
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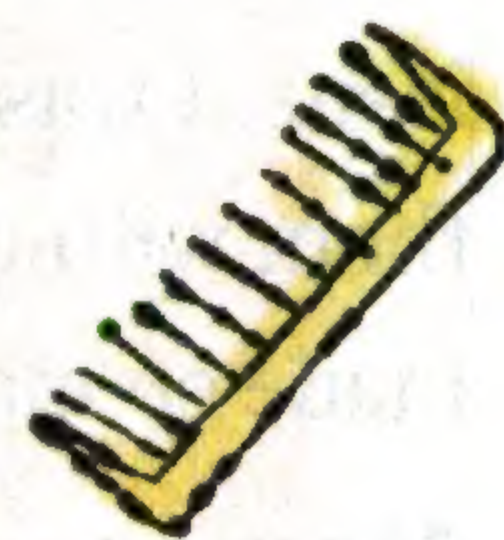
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I got a part on **BROADWAY**.

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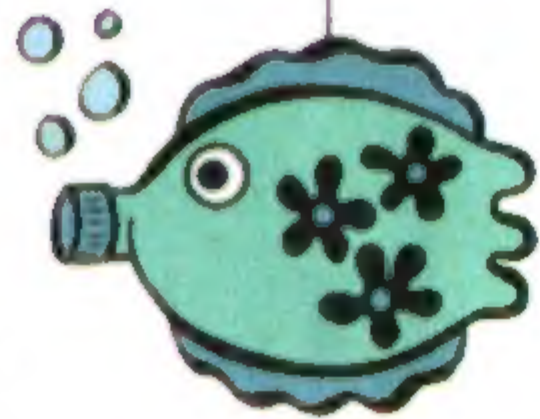
Worried about growing
up? Our older readers
tell you what it's like.

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I **ESCAPED** a terrible wildfire.

Letters from You



Fishy Fun

I absolutely adored "Rainbow Fish" in the May/June 2008 issue. I was thrilled to make them with my friends. We made so many—more than 50!

Mackenzie H.
Age 13, Connecticut



Doggie Desserts

I loved the doggie desserts in "Petty Cash" in the May/June 2008 issue. I made them for my three dogs: Marshmallow, Heidi, and Snuffles. Marshmallow stole a bit of Heidi's because he loved it so much. Thanks a lot!

Camryn D.
Age 10, North Carolina

Creature Cupcakes



I really liked "Cute Cupcakes" in the May/June 2008 issue. The cupcakes were so unique! I made them for my brother's birthday, and they were very tasty.

Amelia E.
Age 13, Connecticut



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to readermail@americangirl.com.

Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 49, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by October 16, 2008 with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—S/O 2008
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by October 16, 2008. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed. **A parent or guardian must sign the entry.**
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.



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CIRCULATION ASSISTANT
Heather Hempel Gomez

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Girls

E X P R E S S

Get Doorganized

Create this handy container and use it to stash your keys, library card, MP3 player, or other easily misplaced items.



1 Find a small, empty cardboard box, such as a mini cereal box, and cut off the top flaps.

2 Cut out a strip of colorful scrapbook paper the same height as the box. Wrap it around the box, and attach with double-sided tape.

3 Use a hole punch to put a hole near the top of the box at each side.

4 To make a handle, string a piece of ribbon through each hole and double-knot each end.

5 Tape trim around the top of the container, and hang it on your bedroom doorknob to collect the little things that you always seem to be losing.



Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Candy... Turnips?

National Candy Corn Day is October 30. Did you know that we might be celebrating Candy Turnip Day instead? When candy makers in the 1800s started using molds to produce different shapes, they made lots of things—besides corn, they made clover leaves, chestnuts, and even turnips!

Buzzword ghastly



How to say it: GAST-lee

What it means: frightful, dreadful, or horrible

One way to use it:
When Taylor played a monster in the haunted house, her mom helped her make a ghastly costume.



The buzzword is tucked into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? The answer is on page 44.

Find It!



Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

True Story

With so many siblings, Savannah F. never gets lonely.

Dear American Girl,

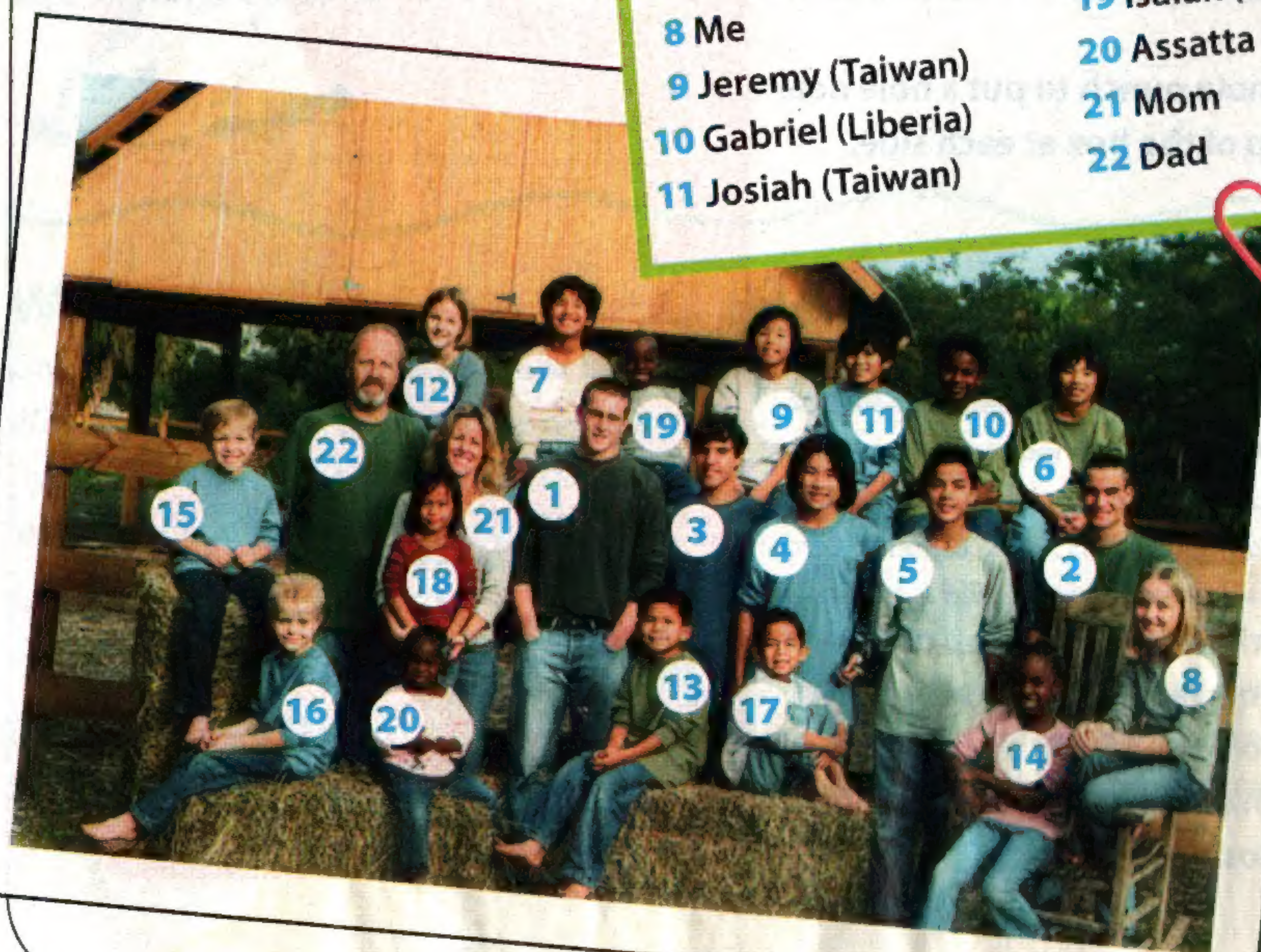
Most people don't believe me when I tell them that I have 14 brothers and 5 sisters. Yes, we have 20 kids in my family. The youngest is Assatta—she just turned 5—and the oldest is Coy, who is 19. I'm a middle child, but I have a lot of company!

I'm one of five biological children in the family. The rest of my brothers and sisters have been adopted from countries all over the world. Assatta is from Liberia, which is in western Africa. My sister Hannah, whom I share a room with, is from Taiwan. There are so many of us that we ride in a bus whenever we go places together. We have a big house and a bunch of pets, and even though we're really busy, we have a lot of fun. I love to tell people about my family because they always look amazed and say, "Are you kidding?" But, no, it's true, and it's great. When you have this many siblings, you never get bored!

Sincerely,
Savannah F.
Age 12, Florida

Meet My Family

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Coy | 12 Madison |
| 2 Anton (Bulgaria) | 13 Caleb (Taiwan) |
| 3 Atanas (Bulgaria) | 14 Sarah (Liberia) |
| 4 Noah (China) | 15 Zack |
| 5 Nathan (Taiwan) | 16 Christian |
| 6 Joshua (Taiwan) | 17 Eli (Vietnam) |
| 7 Hannah (Taiwan) | 18 Emma (Vietnam) |
| 8 Me | 19 Isaiah (Liberia) |
| 9 Jeremy (Taiwan) | 20 Assatta (Liberia) |
| 10 Gabriel (Liberia) | 21 Mom |
| 11 Josiah (Taiwan) | 22 Dad |



Lunch Box

This yummy salad combines sweet and salty treats.

Sprinkle sliced fresh apples or dried apple chips over a plain green salad. Drizzle poppyseed or raspberry vinaigrette dressing over the top. Then choose a few of these add-ins—they all taste great together!



Add-ins:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| * Diced pineapple | * Mozzarella cheese |
| * Chopped celery | * Shredded coconut |
| * Candied nuts | * Golden raisins |
| | * Dried cranberries |

Right-on Reports

Not sure what to read? Eleven-year-old Brigid E. can tell you. A local bookstore asked her to write book reviews, and her opinions are posted in the store and printed in the store's newsletter. "When I get a new book to review, I always stay up late reading," the Washington girl says. The best part of the job? This book lover gets paid in store gift cards!

If your teacher assigns a book report, don't panic. Brigid's tips can help. Ask yourself:

Brigid wants to be an author herself someday.

Why did I like it?

Try to write about a book that you love—it's easier to be positive. If you have to report on a book that you didn't enjoy, think about how it might interest others. "I sit down to write my review while the story is still fresh in my mind," Brigid says.

How can I explain it?

Describe the story, and mention memorable details. "When I'm writing my book reviews, sometimes I pretend that I'm writing the inside flap of the book," Brigid says. "You want to make it sound interesting—without giving the whole story away!"



Creative Corner



Twinkle Toes

Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

In our March/April issue, we asked you which shoes were your favorites. Here's what you said:



Sneakers 300

Flip-flops 296

Ballet flats 252

Boots 142

Next question:

What would be the greatest way to get to school? Circle your choice.

Limousine

Hot-air balloon

Horse-drawn carriage

Name Game

Ever feel like experimenting with your name? Check out these readers' sweet signatures for inspiration.

Allison B.
Age 13, Florida

Claire Anne S.
Age 11, Tennessee

Irene *w
Age 8, Massachusetts

Hilda T.
Age 13, Minnesota

shley V
Age 11, Kansas

Cut out your answer and mail it to the address on page 2.

Twinkle Toes

Find a pair of shoes with rubber toes. Use thick tacky glue to attach rhinestones to the toes. It's easiest to work in sections and use a small paintbrush to spread an even layer of glue onto the toes. Let dry overnight. Keep the shoes dry and clean.



★ American Girl

Help Wanted!

Where do you take your AG magazine? Have you brought it with you on camping trips, on your annual sailing adventure, or on an amazing voyage to Paris? Send us a photo of you with your magazine in a cool location or in front of a landmark, and include a letter telling us where you went and what you did. Send your letter and photo, along with your name, address, and birth date, to the address on page 2. Sorry, photos can't be returned.



Find Your Study Style

Our quiz can help you figure out which way you learn best.

Check all of the statements that apply to you.

- ☐ I am a good writer.
- ☐ I like working in groups.
- ☒ I think jigsaw puzzles are fun.
- ☐ I enjoy playing word games.
- ☐ People ask for my advice.
- ☐ Mazes are easy for me.
- ☐ I am a leader.
- ☒ I enjoy reading.
- ☒ I like to draw.
- ☐ I love to be with friends.
- ☒ I am very organized.
- ☐ I like poetry.
- ☐ I help people with their problems.
- ☐ I understand the differences between similar words.
- ☐ I can find my way anywhere (without getting lost)!



Count how many boxes of each color you checked.



Orange



Green



Blue

111

If you checked ...

Mostly orange: You have language smarts. Take notes from your textbook, rewriting the facts in your own style. Use rhymes or lists to remember facts for tests.

Mostly green: You have people smarts. Form a study group with friends, or have someone ask you quiz questions.

Mostly blue: You have visual smarts, which means that you might learn better by seeing. Draw pictures of math problems to help solve them, and study the images in your textbooks.

Did you check statements in each of the three colors? That might mean that you have different kinds of study smarts. Try any of these ideas to see what works best for you!



AG Art Gallery



Kate Claire Sisters Kate and Claire F. are super-creative co-artists. They invented a cartoon character called Fluffy and work together to draw her in funny scenes. "I come up with the ideas and color them when they're done," 13-year-old Claire says. Adds 12-year-old Kate: "I draw them. I despise coloring things, so it works out!" The Oklahoma sisters have drawn dozens of Fluffies. Here are a few of their favorites:



More AG Art Gallery



Portia Y.
Age 10, Kentucky

We're looking for cartoon art, especially **Japanese-style manga** comic art. Send color copies of your original artwork, along with your name, address, and date of birth, to the address on page 2.

Shining Star

Like lots of other girls, Hailey W. has a soft spot for animals. She was brainstorming for ways to raise money for her local humane society when the idea came to her—she could sell pumpkins for Halloween. She planted a summer garden and harvested the pumpkins to sell in the fall. The pumpkin sale raised \$40, which Hailey delivered to the animal shelter.

The 11-year-old North Dakota girl

saw her gift put to work right away. "The shelter used the \$40 to help a kitten that had been in a fight," Hailey says. "When the kitten was well, I visited her. And I found out that the shelter workers had named the kitten after me!" Hailey returned to the shelter to take a new toy to the rescued kitten, and she started planning another pumpkin sale. "I really hope that my donations can help other animals, too."



Hailey and Pluto

You can shine, too.

You don't have to make a lot of money to make a big difference. Even a few dollars from one sale of baked items, veggies, or crafts can help save an animal's life.

Clever Costumes

These girls worked
their magic and
created unique
Halloween costumes!

Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

Prettiest Pasta



Kristen W.
Age 13, Ohio

Most Legs

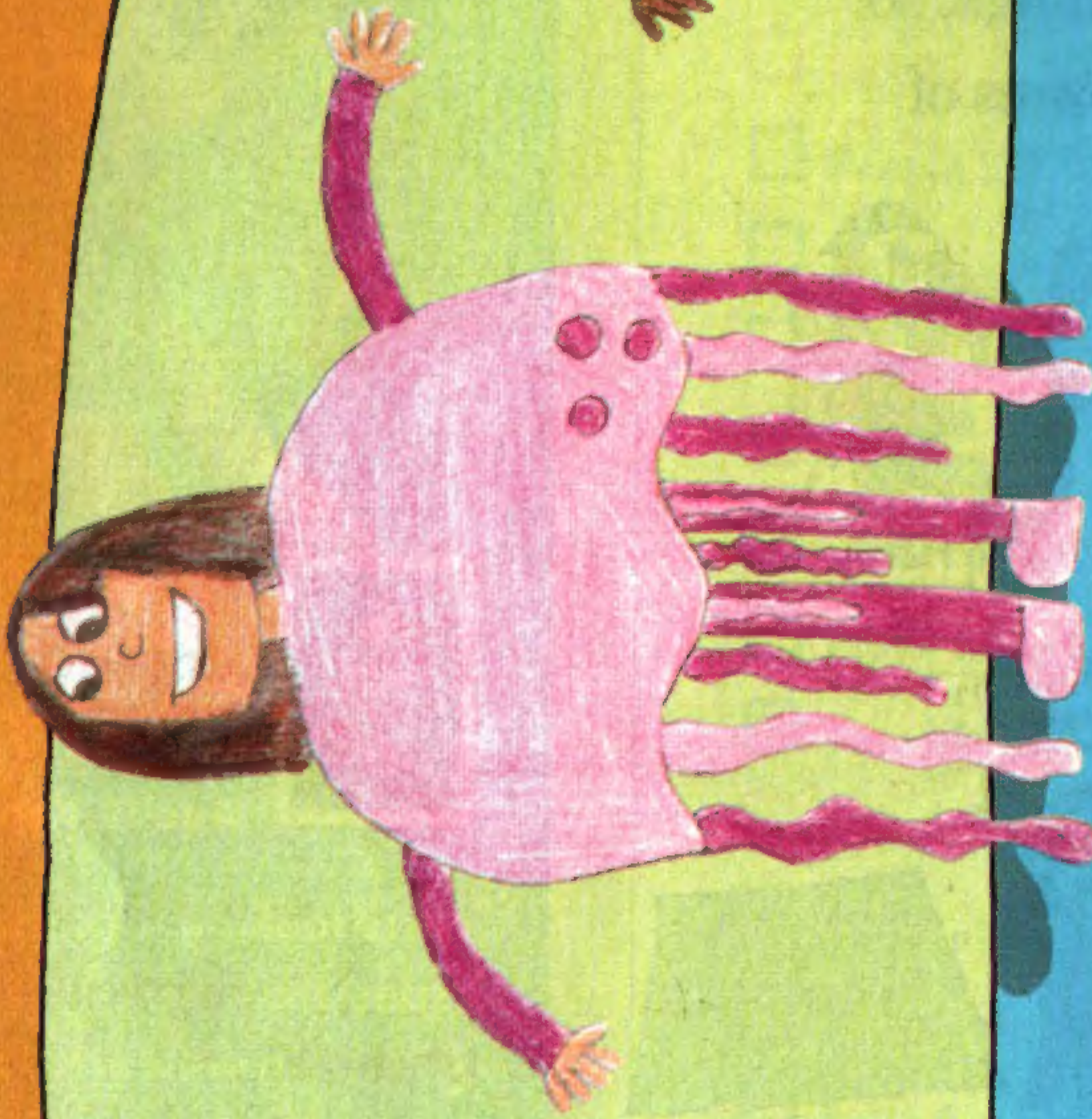
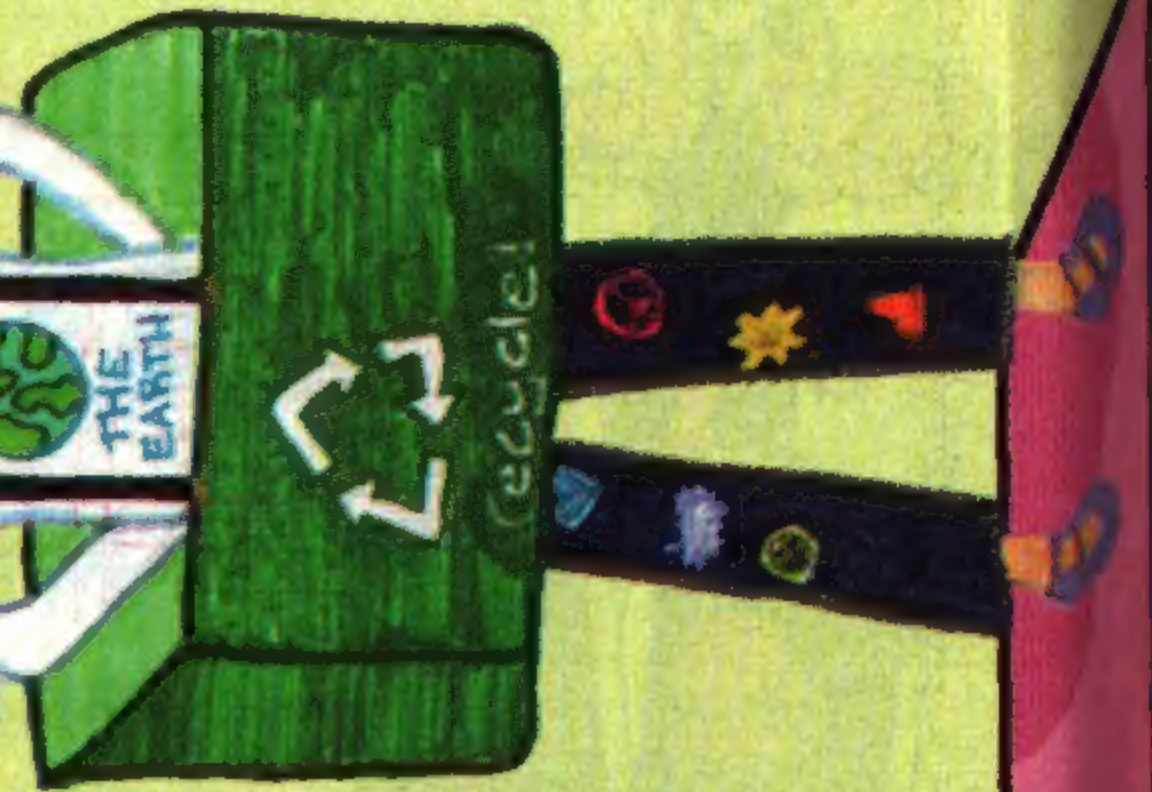


Molly K.
Age 11, Massachusetts

Sweetest Treat



Amber W.
Age 11, New Jersey



Hippest Clip

Brianna R.

Age 12, Ohio

Greenest Girl

Sarah E.

Age 12, Maine



Most Tea-riffic

Alessandra M.

Age 10, Utah

Brightest Idea

Hannah W.

Age 10, Maryland

Most Colorful

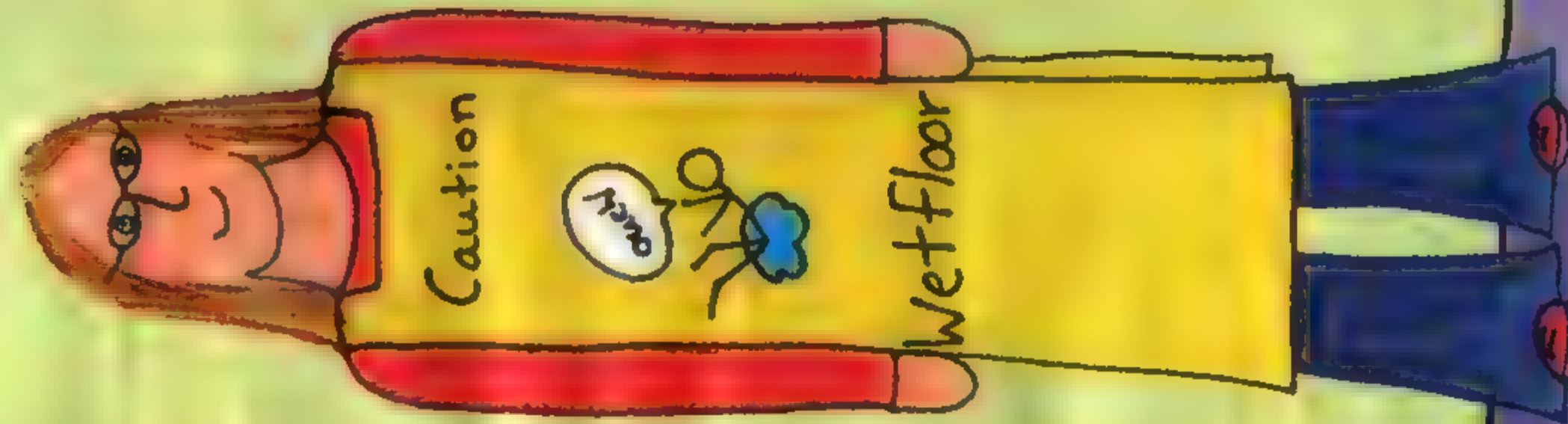
Alessandra L.

Age 9, Michigan

Safest Sign

Margaret A.

Age 13, Minnesota



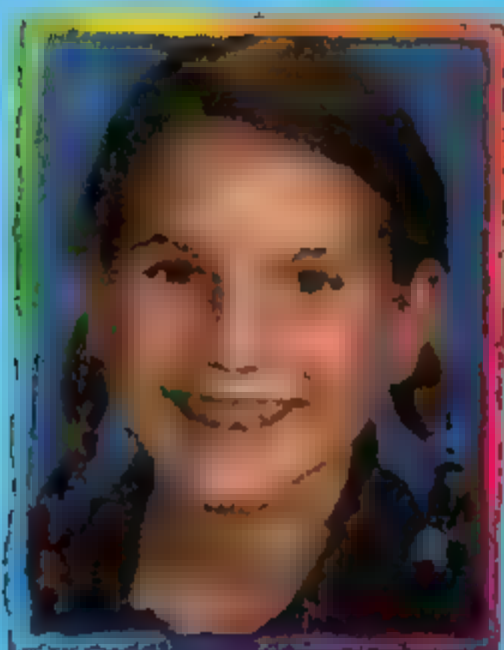
New Contest: Design a Butterfly

Let your imagination take flight and draw a butterfly you can't find in real life! Maybe your dream butterfly would have zebra-striped wings and would wear bows on her antennae. Send your butterfly to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, birth date, and school photo. Deadline: October 10, 2008. Winners will appear in the March/April 2009 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.



Left Out

It never feels good to be left out of something. But these girls found lots of ways to feel better.



A girl was having a sleepover, and she invited every girl in the class but me. It really hurt my feelings. Then I had a party, but I invited everyone in my class so that nobody

would be left out. Twenty-seven kids came, and it was my best birthday ever!

Emily L.

Age 11, California



At school, my three friends decided to start a dog

club, but it was only for people who had dogs. I didn't have a dog at the time, so I couldn't be in the club. Almost everyone in my class was in it, and I felt very left out. After I told my friend that I was feeling left out, she changed the name of the club to the "Dog Lovers" club instead.

Andi M.

Age 11, Pennsylvania



Ever since I was young, I have been left out and

felt like the "different girl." Then I discovered clubs and groups to satisfy my hobbies. Now I'm in writing club, dance, martial arts, and yearbook, and I've made really good friends.

Tiana M.

Age 13, Colorado



For art class, I wanted to be with my age group. I didn't

get in and was put with the older kids. They were talking to each other and I felt left out of their conversations. Then I realized that it didn't matter and the key was to have fun.

Abby A.

Age 9, Minnesota



My friend had a birthday party, and she didn't invite

me. I was very upset. I told her how I felt, and she said that she was sorry. If you feel left out, you should speak up.

Serena W.

Age 8, Pennsylvania



Once, I saw some kids playing volleyball and

I wanted to play, too. When I asked if I could join, they said no because I wasn't good enough. I was mad for a while, but then I decided to jump rope with my other friends, and I forgot all about the volleyball game.

Elly R.

Age 9, New Jersey



Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: What I like about me. What is your favorite thing about yourself? Is it your curly red hair? Your one-of-a-kind laugh? Maybe it's your ability to cheer people up when they are down. Celebrate who you are and tell us the thing that you like best about yourself.

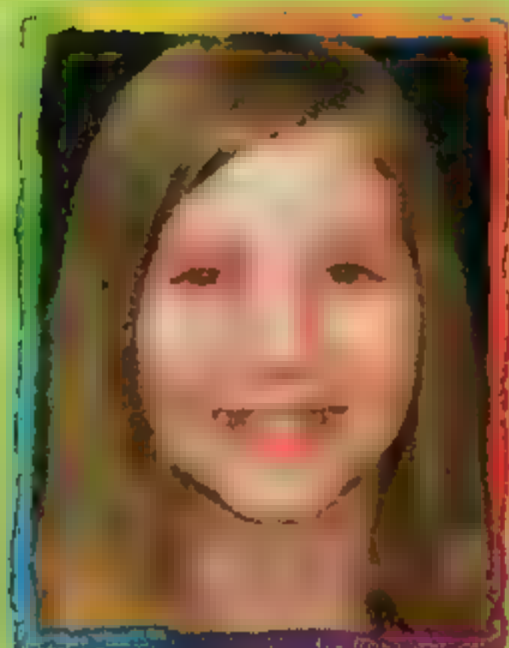
Send answers, first and last name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: October 10, 2008.

Some answers will appear in the March/April 2009 issue. ★

Big Truth

Feel left out?

Find something else **fun** to do!

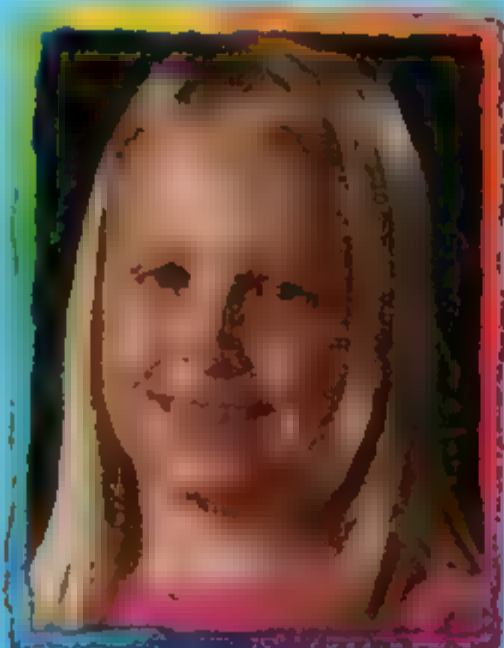


My friend didn't save a seat for me at lunch. I was

upset and wanted to say mean things to her. Just as I was about to stomp over to her, I realized that this was the perfect time to meet new people. And I did!

Katy F.

Age 11, Alabama



One day at school, I found out that my best

friend and I were the only ones not invited to a party. So on the day of the party, we went and did something fun, just her and me, and we made the best of it.

Marion O.

Age 10, Mississippi





Care for Your

End bad hair days with these simple tips and tricks!

Shower Time

Before you shower, brush your hair to loosen dirt and tangles. Once you're in the shower, wet your hair thoroughly. Gently work the shampoo into your scalp and through your hair. Resist the urge to pile your hair on

top of your head and scrub it, which can create tangles. Tilt your head back and rinse in the direction the hair grows. Then apply a conditioner, making sure to work it through your hair. Rinse again.

Dry, Dry Again

After a shower, blot (don't rub) your hair with a towel. Comb wet hair before drying—don't brush it. Hair dryers are great when you're running late, but too

much heat can damage your hair. Let your hair air dry whenever possible. If you do use a dryer, make sure it's on a warm or cool setting—not hot.

Hair

by Shanon Lyon

Tangle Troubles

Use a comb to gently work through stubborn snarls, starting at the ends. Hair ties and bands can create lots of super-cute 'dos, but the wrong kind can break your

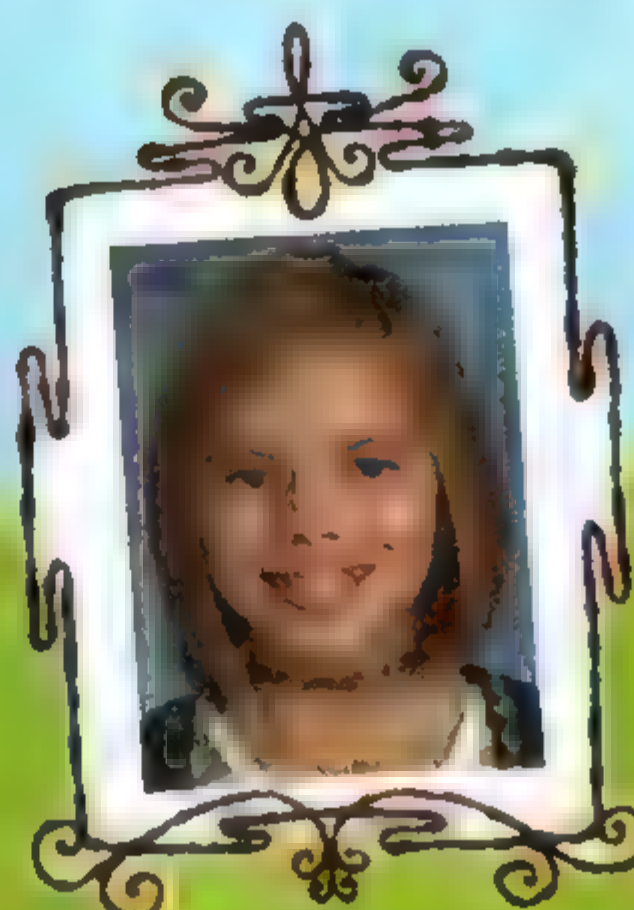
hair and cause annoying little flyaways. Be sure to use real hair elastics—not rubber bands—and pull them out gently to avoid breaking your hair.

Time-Savers

Try washing and drying your hair at night to make getting ready in the morning easier. When you wake up, spray your hair with a little water to get rid of bedhead. Wet your bangs, and blow them dry to give them a finished style.

Uniquely You!

When it comes to hair, no two heads are alike. See why some of our readers love their locks, and get tips for taking care of your unique hair type.



"My hair just falls into place, so I don't have to worry about styling it."

Lauren A.
Age 12, Texas



Short hair looks best with frequent trims.

Try a trim every 4-6 weeks to keep your hair healthy.



"Long hair is good for doing a bunch of different styles. I like braids."

Angellica R.
Age 9, California



Sleeping with long hair in a low, loose ponytail will minimize morning tangles.



"My hair is really easy to do in the morning. I use lots of different accessories."

Lavetta S.
Age 13, Georgia



If your hair is chemically relaxed, it's important to keep it moisturized. Talk to your stylist about how often you should wash your hair and whether you should condition it. Every girl's hair is unique, so find out what would work best for you.



"What I like best about my hair is that it's different from everybody else's."

Alexa G.
Age 10, Georgia



For curly hair, apply a small amount of gel or mousse to towel-dried hair, and then gently shape your curls with your fingers. Use a diffuser on your hair dryer for a minute or two, and then keep your hands—and your mind—off, touching and brushing your hair will only make it frizzy.

Paint a Pumpkin

Bored out of your gourd with your plain old pumpkin?
Paint a ghastly Halloween decoration that will make you howl!





Boo!
We want to see your
spookiest pumpkin
designs. Whether you
made these pumpkins
or created a new idea,
send your photos to
the address on
page 2.

Getting Started

YOU WILL NEED



An adult to help you

- * Small pumpkin
- * Newspaper
- * Deep jar lid (for cat or witch design)
- * Paintbrushes
- * Acrylic gesso, available at arts and crafts stores (optional)



1 Choose a small pumpkin with no holes or dents. Wash all the dirt off the pumpkin. Let dry. Ask an adult to remove the stem if you're making the mummy design.



2 Cover the work area with newspaper. For the witch or cat design, turn the pumpkin on its side and set it in a deep jar lid to keep it steady while you paint. You should also put the finished pumpkin in a lid to keep it from rolling.



3 Optional for all designs: paint the entire pumpkin with acrylic gesso to prevent the paint from chipping off. Let dry before painting a design.

Witch

YOU WILL NEED

- * Black marker
- * Paintbrushes
- * Green, yellow, black, purple, white acrylic paints
- * Craft glue
- * Raffia
- * Dry bean
- * Black party hat
- * Scissors
- * Black felt
- * Ribbon



1 Use a marker to draw eyes and a mouth on the top of the pumpkin, around the stem. Paint the pumpkin green, being careful to paint around the outlined features. Let dry.



2 Paint the eyes yellow and the mouth black. Let dry. Paint a purple circle in each eye. Let dry. Paint black eyebrows and pupils. Paint a yellow stripe on the mouth, and add white teeth. Let dry.



3 Glue raffia to the pumpkin to make hair. Glue a bean to the stem to make a wart. To make a hat, cut a circle of black felt, and cut a smaller circle in the middle. Drape the felt ring over the party hat. Glue orange ribbon to the hat. Let dry.

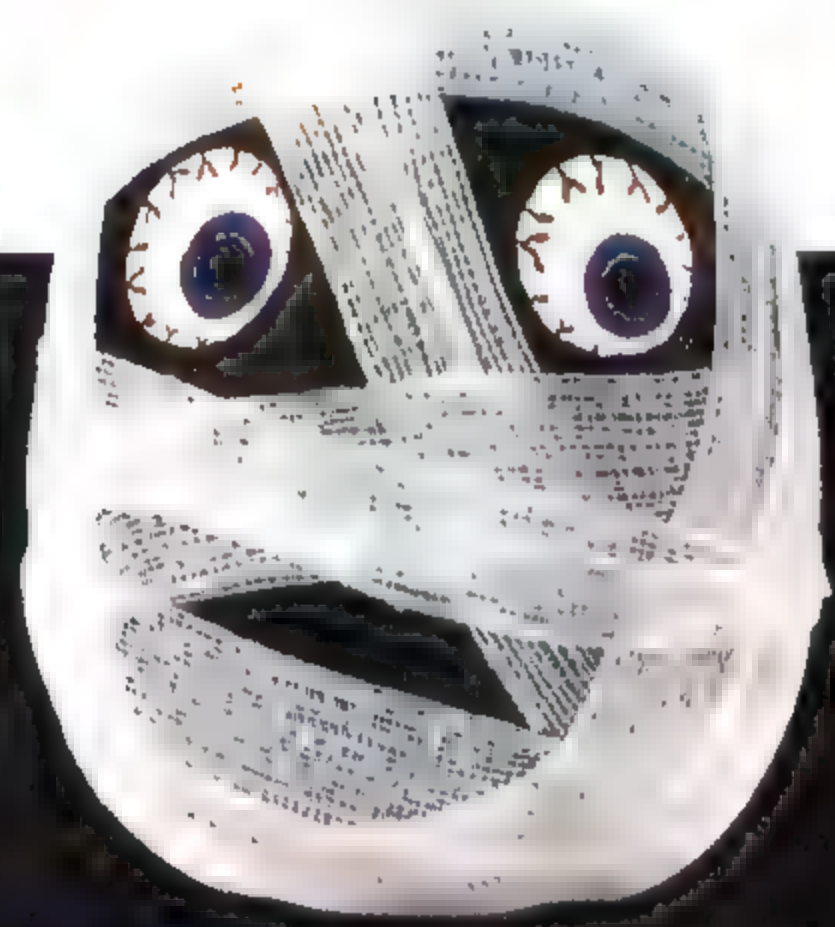


The world's biggest pumpkin weighed 1,689 pounds—about as much as a fully grown bull.

Mummy

YOU WILL NEED

- * Black, red markers
- * Paintbrushes
- * Black, white, purple acrylic paints
- * 2-inch-wide gauze
- * Scissors
- * Craft glue



1 Use black marker to draw 2 circles for eyes. Draw 2 smaller circles inside for irises. Paint the rest of the pumpkin black, being careful to outline the eyes. Let dry.



2 Paint the eyes white and let dry. Paint irises purple and let dry. Paint black pupils and let dry. Use a red marker to add bloodshot lines.



3 Carefully wrap the pumpkin in pieces of gauze and glue in place. Use gauze to outline the mouth as you wrap. Let dry.

Cat

YOU WILL NEED

- * Black marker
- * Paintbrushes
- * Black, green, orange, white acrylic paints
- * Craft glue
- * Black raffia
- * Scissors
- * Black felt
- * Cat collar (optional)



1 Use a marker to draw triangles for eyes and a nose on the bottom of the pumpkin. Draw a mouth and connect it to the nose. Paint the pumpkin black, being careful to paint around the outlined features. Let dry.



2 Paint the eyes green and the nose and mouth orange. Let dry. Paint black triangles in the eyes for pupils. Paint white triangles in the mouth for teeth. Let dry.



3 Glue black raffia to the pumpkin to make whiskers. Cut triangles from felt, and glue them to the pumpkin to make ears. Let dry. Buckle a cat collar around a lid under the pumpkin. ★

Friendly Advice

We asked our older AG readers to share their best advice on growing up. Here are a few of their wisest words.



"Don't try to grow up too fast. Enjoy life as a kid, and go outside and play with friends while you still have the chance."

Christine H.
Age 15, Rhode Island

"Whatever you do, keep open contact with your mom. She is your best friend throughout these tough years."

Emily M.
Age 13, Texas



"Choosing one friend to be your best friend can hurt your other friends' feelings. You should learn to make many friends so that you can always have someone to be there for you."

Ana D.
Age 14, Colorado

"Sometimes a little bit of change is good, because that's one of the things that comes with growing up, but don't change your personality. One of the biggest mistakes you can make is to change who you are inside, because then you're not truly yourself. Your unique qualities make you you."

Melanie C. :-)
Age 15, California

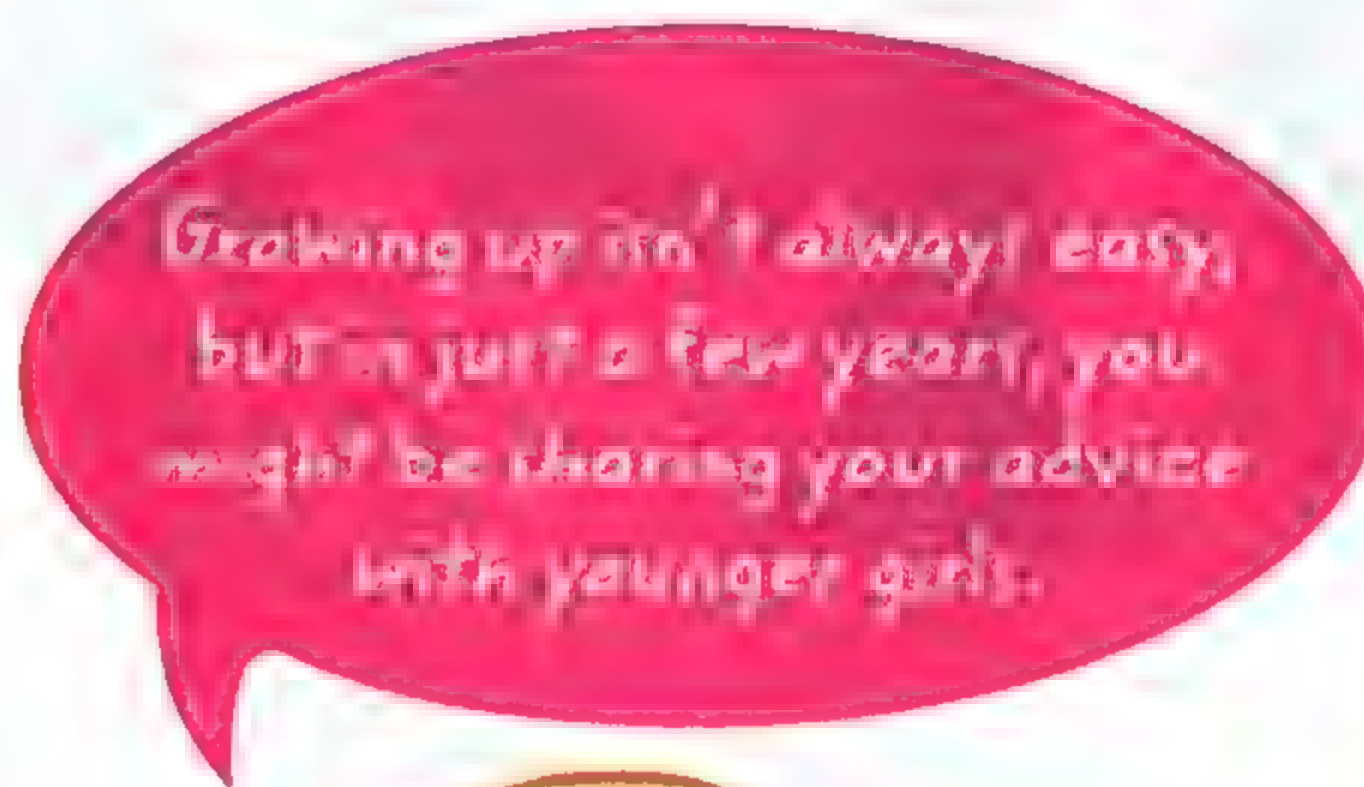


"No matter how strange it feels to tell your mom something, remember—she wasn't always a mom. She was once a kid, too, and chances are good that if you are patient and don't yell, scream, or whine at her, she will understand."

Colleen M.
Age 16, Canada

"Respect yourself. Know your limits and your strengths, and never let someone talk you into doing or saying something that you know in your heart is not right. Always be true to yourself." ★

Aaliyah H.
Age 13, Tennessee



Sh★w ★Your Spirit

We've got spirit! How about you? Whether you're cheering from the stands or playing on the field, let your spirit shine from A to Z.





A *is for* **Award**

Make these badges for your friends or teammates. Create awards such as Most Spirited, Best Team Player, or Loudest Cheerer. Cut out 2 felt circles—one larger than the other. Staple pieces of ribbon to the middle of the larger circle. Use craft glue to attach the smaller circle on top of the larger circle. Write on the felt with puffy paint. Let dry.



B *is for* **Bag**

Keep all of your sports equipment in a tote bag labeled with your name or jersey number. Purchase iron-on patches and a plain bag at a craft store. Lay the iron-ons on the bag to make a design you like, and ask an adult to attach them according to the directions. Use your bag especially for practices—your gear will be ready to go when you are!



C *is for* **Congratulations**

Cheering for your team is important, but remember to be respectful to the opposing team. Congratulate players on the other team whether you win or lose. Say "Good game!" and give a big smile.



D *is for* **Decorate**

If your friend has a big game coming up, decorate her locker with mini spirit posters. It will brighten her day! Add stickers to colorful paper. Use gel pens to write phrases such as "You'll be great!" and "Go, Team!" Tape the posters to her locker before school starts.



E *is for* **Energy**

Before a game, get energized by eating a healthy snack that celebrates your team colors. Blueberries mixed with pineapple are perfect for a team whose colors are blue and yellow. Strawberries and yogurt-covered raisins are great if your team colors are red and white.



F *is for* **Face Paint**

Face paint isn't just for your face! Everyone will know what your favorite team is when you sport some fun doodles on your hand or arm. Use washable face paint and ask an adult for help.



G

is for Games

Get to know your teammates by playing this game at the end of a practice. Ask your coach to yell out anything—a food, a movie, an activity, a kind of pet, or any other thing she can think of. If anyone on the team likes it, she runs to the left side of the room. If anyone doesn't like it, she runs to the right side of the room. Have your coach yell out several things. You'll quickly learn what your teammates like and don't like. You might run out of breath, too!



H

is for Headband

This spirit headband will brighten your hair at a game or at a practice. Double-knot both ends of an 8-inch piece of elastic to both ends of a 15-inch piece of ribbon. Trim the ends. Make sure the headband fits snugly around your head.

I

is for Invent a Cheer

Get a group of friends together and create a new cheer. Start by thinking of your mascot, colors, and sport. Recite your new cheer at a game—other people will catch on and start cheering, too! Here are some examples:



J

is for Jump

Improve your skills by practicing this drill outside. Try it a few times each week. Stand on

grass with your feet shoulder-width apart. Lean slightly forward with your back straight and arms slightly bent. Bend your knees and then immediately explode straight up with your arms stretched above you. Land with your knees slightly bent, rest for a few seconds, and repeat ten times.



K

is for Kit

Give a friend or teammate a spirit kit to cheer her on before a game. In a small goody bag put a mini card decorated with stickers, a spirit headband (see H), an apple for energy, and a sweet treat for after the game.



is for Lid

Add letter stickers to the bill of a plain baseball hat. Spell out your team name or your mascot. Go, Bears!

M



is for Mascot

Make a silly mascot bobble head to sit on your desk. Use double-sided tape to attach a strip of felt around an empty, clean yogurt container. Make a lid for the

yogurt container by cutting a foam circle the same size as the top. Attach it with double-sided tape. Cut a face from foam sheets. Attach googly eyes with glue. Let dry. Wrap a pipe cleaner around a pencil to make a spring. Use Glue Dots to attach the spring to the back of the animal head and to the lid. Boing! Boing!



O

is for Organize a Pep Rally

Throw a party full of pep to celebrate a great season or to get excited for a big game. Invite your team over for pizza and punch. Decorate the room with streamers and balloons in your team's colors. Cheer when each player walks in the door. Watch videos of your team or tune in to a professional sports event on TV. End the party with a group photo.

P

is for Pennant



Make a pennant for your bedroom or a mini pennant for your locker. Cut a triangle from a piece of felt. Use puffy paint or adhesive felt letters to spell your team name, jersey number, or mascot name. Attach rhinestones with craft glue. Let dry. For mini pennants, attach magnets to the back with craft glue. Let dry.

Q

is for Quiet Time

If you are nervous before a big competition, take a few minutes to calm down by listening to music on a portable music player. Stretch for a few minutes and breathe slowly.

R

is for Ribbons

Make a ribbon garland to display all of the ribbons you've earned. String or pin the awards onto a long piece of wide ribbon. Ask an adult to hang the ribbon across your wall.

N

is for Number One

Make a mini foam-finger pencil topper. Cut a pointing hand from a foam sheet. Draw fingers with a gel pen. Ask an adult to cut a slit at the bottom of the hand for the pencil to slide through.



S

is for Socks

Show your spirit from your head to your toes. Wear mismatched socks in your team colors—the crazier the better! Lace your shoes with colored laces, too.



T

is for Thanks

At the end of the season, thank your coach with a gift. Ask all of your teammates to sign their names on a ball, a shoe, or a helmet. Your coach will love the keepsake from the year.



U

is for Up

Put your hair up high with a pom-pom ponytail holder. To make a pom-pom, hold the end of a piece of yarn with your left thumb pressed against your left palm. Loosely wrap the yarn around your other fingers 30 times. Slip the yarn off. Repeat with a different color. Stack the two colors of yarn. Tie one long piece of yarn around the middle in a tight double knot. Tie the same piece in a double knot around a hair elastic. Snip loops open with scissors and fluff.



V

is for Victory

Make a victory tank top! Tie ribbons in your team's colors to the straps of a tank top for each time you've scored a goal or your team has won a game this season.



W

is for Wristbands

Decorate a pack of plain wristbands with puffy paint. Let dry overnight. Wear a wristband to a practice or to school on a spirit day.



X

is for eXtra Effort

What's most important is trying your best. If you missed a goal during a game, practice hard and try for another goal next time. Ask your coach for extra help if you don't feel ready for a game. If you're frustrated, don't get discouraged—you can improve with practice!



Y

is for Yummy

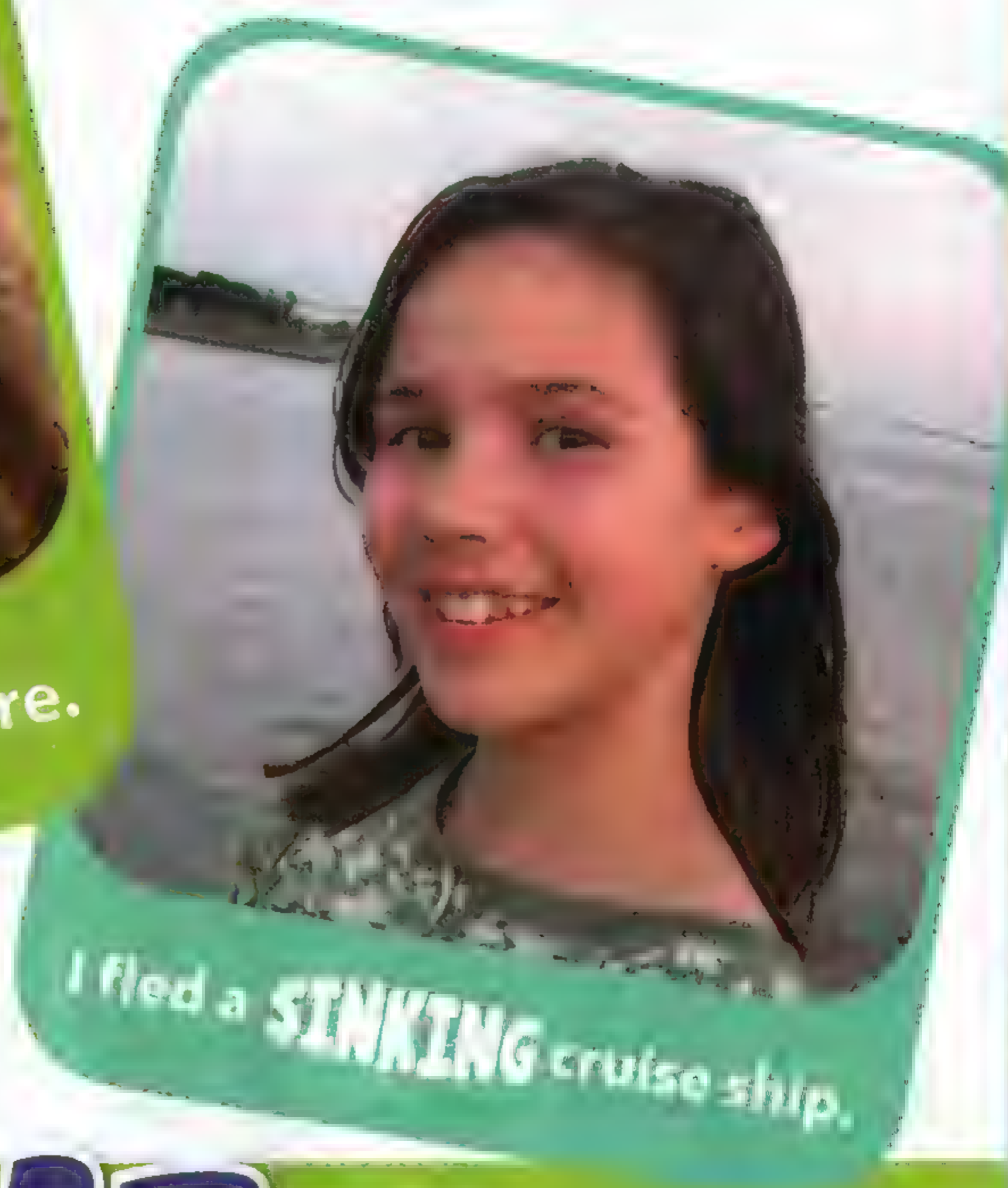
Celebrate a win with spirited cupcakes. Decorate the cupcakes with stripes of M&Ms in your team colors.

Z

is for Zone

Stay in the "spirit zone." You can show your spirit in many ways. On school spirit day, get silly and try to wear a school color on every part of your body. Compliment your teammates at practice, or cheer on a friend when she plays in a big game. Everyone loves a little spirit! ★

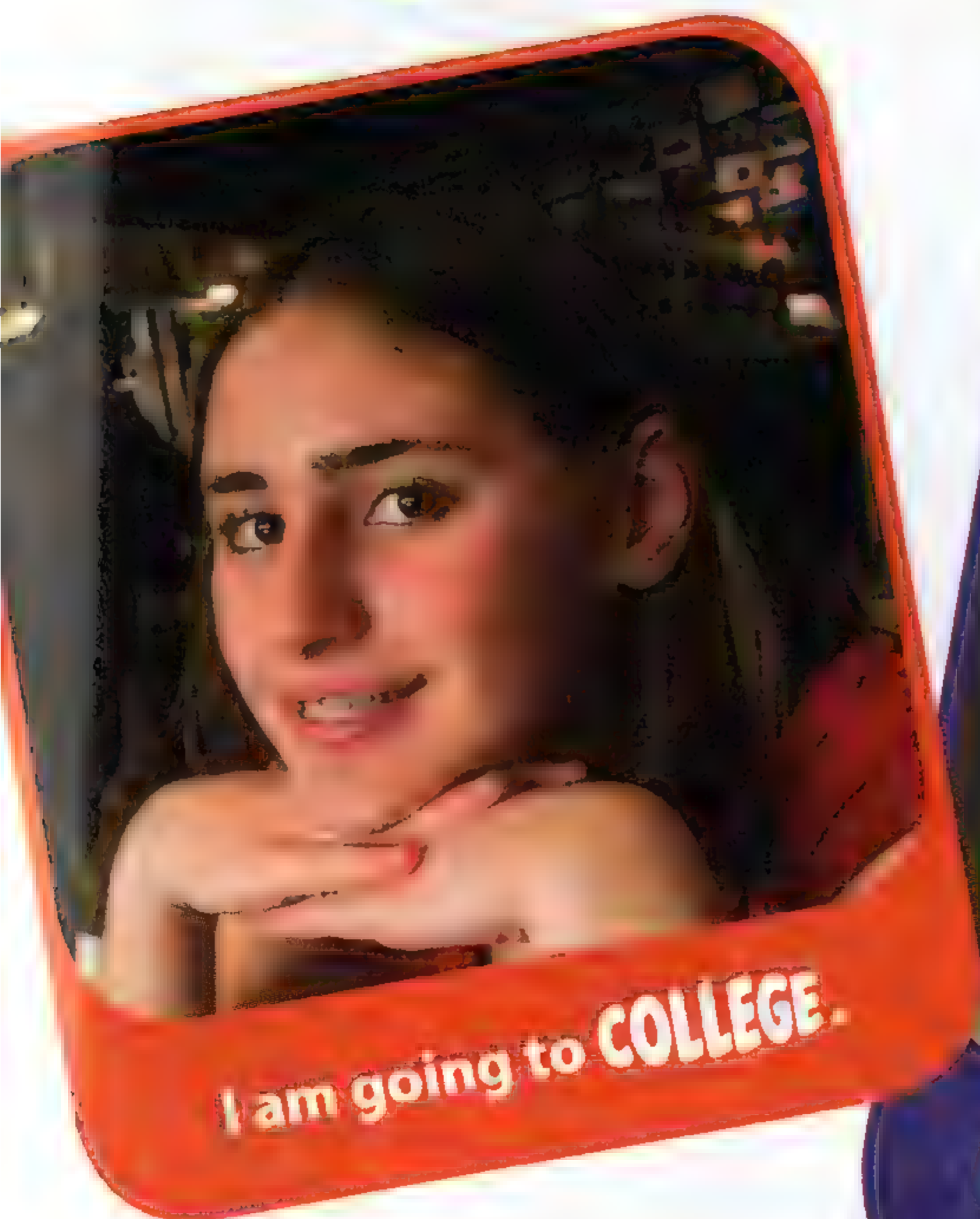




I Can't **BELIEVE**

It Happened to Me!

{ Meet six girls who have amazing true stories to tell. }



Michelle is starting **COLLEGE** this fall.

I started thinking seriously about going to college when I got a postcard in the mail. It came from an all-women's college that had a program for girls like me. I've always done well in school. I skipped sixth grade, but my classes still didn't challenge me enough. I decided to take a college-entrance exam, and my scores were very high. That's how this college found me. It offered a lot of high-level science classes, and it had admitted girls who wanted to start college early.

My family and I traveled across the country from our home in California to visit the campus. I got to attend some classes and to meet some of the other girls in the program. I knew that this school was the perfect place for me. I applied, and I was accepted on the

day after my 13th birthday. My classes start this fall, which means that I'm skipping high school altogether.

At college, I will live in a dorm with other girls close to my age. I'll have a roommate and will share a bathroom with everyone on my floor. Being away from my family won't be easy, but I'm very excited to be on my own, and I'm ready for the challenge. Starting college now means that I'll be able to earn a degree by the time I'm 17. After that, I plan to go to law school and to keep studying science.

My older sister, Melanie, complains that she'll have to do all the chores at home while I'm away. I think that she'll miss me, because I know I will miss her. But I'm going to be able to live and study with girls who are a lot like me and who love learning as much as I do. I can't wait!



Photos: Karen Vaisman



During my visit, I got to be part of an experiment in class.

Kyra **CALLED** for help just in the nick of time.



Here I am with Mom. I'm so glad she's O.K.

One day last year, my mom said she wasn't feeling well. She called my grandma, who said that she'd be over to check on us shortly.

But soon I could tell that something was really wrong with Mom. In school I had learned that if something bad happened, I should call 911. When my mom told me that she couldn't see, I decided to call. I'm glad that I did, because while I was talking to the 911 operator on the phone, my mom passed out. She didn't answer when I asked if she was O.K. It was hard for me to stay calm because it was so scary seeing Mom lying on the floor.

The operator stayed on the phone with me, asking questions about my mom. Nobody else was around.

When the ambulance arrived, the rescue workers said that my mom would be all right. They took her to the hospital. My grandma arrived, and we went to the hospital, too. It turned out that my mom had had a seizure, which is a problem with the brain, and it was a good thing that I'd called for help. Later, when we brought my mom home, she seemed fine, but I helped her as she walked, just in case.

I was interviewed on the news about what I had done, and the city where I live gave me an award for being a 911 Hero. My whole class went with me to city hall for the award ceremony. It feels good to have done something that was helpful, especially since it was for my mom.

Jocelyn and her family had to **FLEE** a wildfire.

Last October, my family and I were on a pumpkin-picking trip when my mom got an emergency call—wildfires were headed in our direction. We raced home, and we knew that we'd have to evacuate. The air was smoky, and the sky looked red. My dad hitched up the horse trailer and loaded our four nervous horses. I waited in the backseat of the truck with our three dogs, who were panting and worried. As we left, all I could do was hope that our house would be safe.

We didn't get far because fire was threatening all of the highways and main roads. A fire marshal led us to a nearby ranch, where we had to wait

with all of our neighbors for five hours before there was a way out. All we could do was comfort the animals. Eventually the marshal led us out on narrow dirt roads. The embers in the sky looked like a thousand fireflies.

The next day, my family found out that our house had burned down. I lost the Breyer horse collection that I loved and a very special necklace that my great-grandmother had given to me. Since then, we have gotten a new place to live, new clothes, and new furniture. The horses have a new barn, too. I have realized that material things come and go, but my family is together, along with our animals, and that's the most important thing.



It's been tough for us,
but my family is doing great.

NickKayla got a role in a **BROADWAY** show.

I love acting and performing, and I've been doing it for practically my entire life. I had auditioned for the part of Young Nala in *The Lion King* before, but I was always too young and small for the role. I went into my latest *Lion King* audition well prepared but trying not to get too excited, in case it was another disappointment.

A few days later, my grandmother arrived at school holding balloons and flowers. I was confused for a second, but then I knew. I had gotten the part! I screamed, and everybody asked me what had happened. I had just gotten a huge role—on Broadway!—and I was on my way to New York.

Leaving my home in Maryland was tough. I was moving away from my friends and my home, but I was so excited. Just a few weeks later, my grandma and I moved to an apartment not far from the theater where I'd be working. Some other actors and I started rehearsing scenes and practicing singing and acting almost every day of the week. After a month or so, I joined the show.

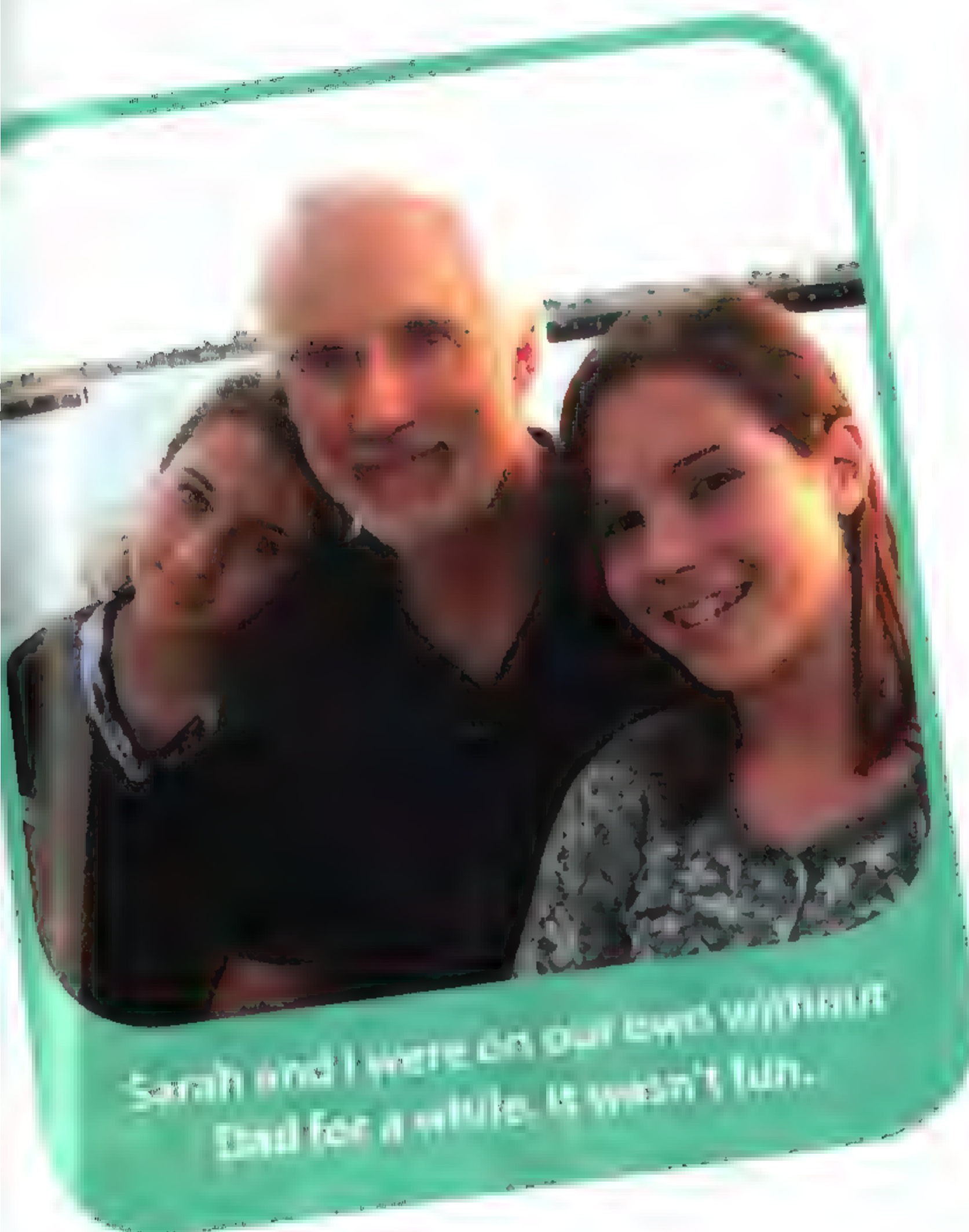
All of this would be a lot harder for me if I wasn't able to talk to my mom every day—she's still back in Maryland, and we talk all the time by phone, text, or IM. The cast and crew are really nice to me, too. It's like I have a family at the theater. I can't be in the show forever because sooner or later I'll get too old to play Young Nala. But I won't be leaving New York. I got into a performing arts school here, and I'll be starting my studies. Who knows? Maybe I'll get to play the adult Nala when I get a little older. I'd love to do that!

Some puppets used in *The Lion King* take three people to operate.



That wire on my forehead?
It's actually my microphone!

Katie and her family **ESCAPED** a sinking cruise ship.



My dad, my sister Sarah, and I had just boarded a cruise ship for a few days of fun. We were planning to go ashore at an island in Greece when we felt a vibration and heard an awful grinding sound. When my dad asked a crew member what was happening, he told us to put on life jackets and go to our emergency station.

We dashed back to our room for our life jackets and headed for our station. People were running everywhere. The floor was tilting so badly that we could barely walk. We wound our way through a crush of people. It was a little scary, and some people were crying, but most of us didn't think that it was too big a deal. We waited for a while before we heard that

women and kids would be evacuating first. Dad gave Sarah and me some money, hugged us, and told us to stay together. Sarah and I climbed down a flimsy rope ladder to a small boat that had come out to rescue passengers. We squeezed together to make room for more people, and the little boat took us to shore.

Sarah and I waited for Dad, and we finally spotted him on the third deck of a huge ferry. We were relieved to be back together! We spent the night on another cruise ship, and when we woke up the next day, we found out that our ship had sunk. We knew that we had been lucky. It took us two days to get back home to California, but I'm so thankful that we made it. It could have been a lot worse.

Meghan **MOVED** with her family to China.

When my parents told my brothers and me that our family would be moving from our home in Wisconsin to China, I thought for sure that they were kidding. But no, they were serious. Dad was being transferred, and we were in for a huge change. I was sad at first, but then I got excited. I thought that it was going to be so cool to move around the world.

And I was right! I've made lots of new friends. I go to an American school, but I've been learning Mandarin Chinese, and I love to practice when I meet new people and when I'm out shopping. Most people in our city live in huge apartment buildings or in tiny houses that have only two or three rooms total. There are so many people here.

I'm amazed to think that some of the high-rises have as many residents as in my entire hometown. Our house is in a neighborhood called a *compound*. It's kind of a mini city within a huge city, and it's filled with other families like ours that have moved here from all over the world.

Living here has changed me. I've been able to travel to different countries, and that has helped me to learn about other cultures. At first, I was annoyed by some of the food (such as jellyfish—yuck!) and the way people do some things. But I am learning that even if food or customs are different from what I'm used to, that doesn't mean they're bad. It just means that they're different. We're staying here for at least another year, so I know that I'll go home understanding the world a little bit better. ★



AG's Fun Finder

by Patti Kelley Criswell

START

Hey,

(name of activity)

looks like fun.

Ask them questions, such as...

Do you need to practice when you're at home, too?
If so, how often?

What kind of equipment do you need?

Where do you get the equipment?

Where do you practice and perform?

What do you like about this activity?

What do you dislike about the activity?

Are you still interested?

Try to find something that is a better fit for you.
Return to Start.

Do you know people who do this activity?

Ask around for people who do. Then return to Start.

Do you have the time and energy to do this?

Tick! Tock!

CHESS TEAM SIGN-UP

SCHOOL PLAY!

To Do
Can
Gum
Run
Gum




No

RETURN TO START

Yes

No

Yes

You're trying to find a **sport**  or **hobby** that's just right for you.  But with so many options, how do you choose? Our **quiz** can help you find your way. 



Advice for having fun and staying inspired in any activity can be found in **Go For It!**, available in bookstores.



NO

Does this work for your **parents' schedules**?



YES,
sweetie!

Continue here

No

Do you have the **equipment** that you need?

Can you get equipment easily?

YES

No

Talk to your parents for **ideas**. If you can't get equipment, you might have to consider an activity that is a better fit.

Return to Start.

YES!



Congratulations!

You're ready to try something new. No matter what activity you've chosen, make sure that you give it your best. And above all, **have fun!** ★



MIDDLE SCHOOL MISADVENTURES

BY AMANDA ROSE HOVING



SUMMER'S ALMOST OVER, AND SOPHIE'S NOT SURE SHE'S READY FOR A BRAND-NEW SCHOOL.



WELCOME TO JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sophie and her best friend, Laura, were relaxing in the warm sunshine, floating around Laura's pool on dazzling pink inflatable recliners while Laura's mom worked nearby in the yard. It was a perfect late-summer day.

The summer had been made up of many perfect days just like this one. Days spent lazing in Laura's pool. Days of picnics and water-park visits and sleepovers. Days of laughing and singing and creating more of Sophie's famous comic books—well, famous among her friends, anyway.

Sophie loved writing and illustrating "The Highly Amazing Super Adventures of Awesome Girl" comics. She often could be found at her desk in her attic bedroom creating her comics among scattered sheets of paper and colored pencils.

The girls had just been discussing Laura's annual end-of-summer party. It was only three days away, and they couldn't wait. This year, Laura had chosen the party theme "Be a Superstar." As usual, Sophie had helped with ideas for snacks and decorations. But this year, Laura had a big surprise up her sleeve—one that she wasn't even sharing with her best friend.

"I want it to be a surprise to *everyone*, Sophie," Laura said when Sophie continued to pester her. "It will be so much more amazing that way. You'll see. It will be worth the wait!" Laura paused and then smiled. "Remember, there is a big hint in the invitation."

Sophie smiled as she tried to imagine what "Be a Superstar" could possibly mean. She felt happy. Yes, it was a perfect day. *Nothing can bring me down*, she thought.

"Can you believe there are only six more days until 'Meet the Teacher' day?" asked Laura.

Well, almost nothing, thought Sophie.

"I can't wait for sixth grade," Laura continued. "We'll finally be at a whole new school! Aren't you excited?"

Sophie jerked toward Laura to answer, but she lost her balance. She rolled off the float and into the water with a graceless PLOP! When she finally popped up for air, she found Laura laughing uncontrollably at her water "ballet."



Sophie trudged the two blocks home. When she arrived at her house, she went up to her room. She saw a note and some new clothes spread out on her bed. Snuggling on top was her cat, Mister Fur.



Sophie didn't want to think about new clothes—and definitely not about growing up. But it was hard to ignore. Her bulletin board held proof that things were changing. *We look a little different now*, Sophie thought, studying the photos of her friends' smiling faces. Some were doing their hair differently now. Others didn't just look different—they acted different. Older. Sophie remembered with a red face the time when some of her friends were talking about a new band that she had no clue existed. Maybe she just wasn't as mature as the rest of them.

The start of school was approaching, and there was no way to stop it. Sophie decided to make herself feel better by working on a new comic book. This one would be for her eyes only. It would be more like a journal. She would work on it when she was feeling stressed out. She decided to call it "Middle School Misadventures."

The next morning, Laura and Sophie were at the party store, eagerly digging through the sale bin of favors, when they saw their classmate Sarah and another girl walking toward them.

"Hi, Laura. Hi, Sophie," said Sarah. She was a quiet but nice girl who sometimes sat at their lunch table. "How's your summer been?"

"Great!" answered Sophie.



"Laura, are you having a party?" Sarah asked, noticing the full baskets of supplies that Sophie and Laura had picked out.

"Oh, yeah—it's an end-of-summer party," Laura said.

"Cute," Maggie muttered.

Laura's mom walked up. "Did you find everything?"

"Yeah, Mom," Laura said. "We found some great stuff."

Laura's mom noticed Sarah and her cousin. "Hi, girls."

"Mom, I was just telling Sarah and Maggie about my party," Laura said, giving her mom a meaningful glance.

"Oh, yes! Of course, you girls are also welcome to come," Laura's mom said.

Laura nodded her thanks to her mom for taking the hint. "It's on Friday night at my house. Oh—and you can dress up if you want. I'll drop off an invitation that gives all of the details."

Sophie thought she saw Maggie roll her eyes.

"Thanks, Laura. We'll see if we can come," Sarah said. "We've got to go. Bye!" Maggie shrugged, and then she and Laura walked away.

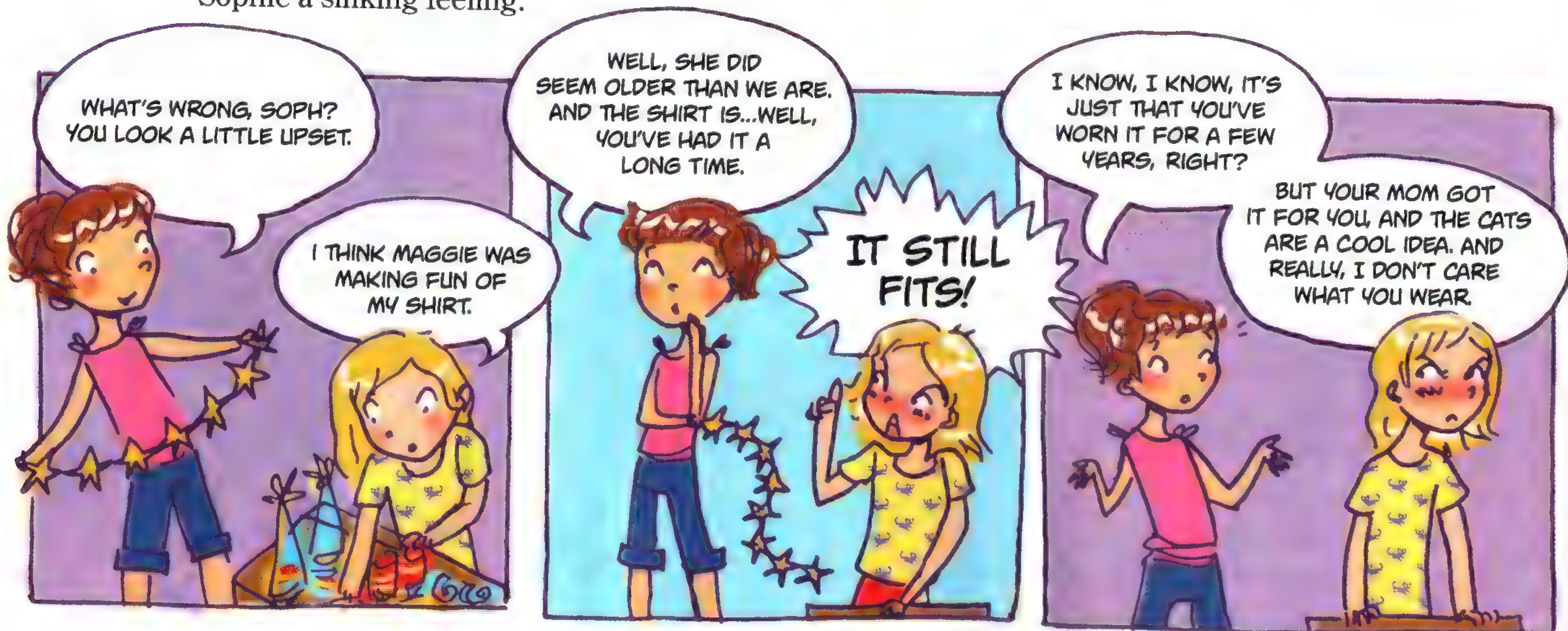
"Bye, Sarah. Bye, Maggie," Sophie called, a small frown on her face.

Back at Laura's house, the girls poured the contents of their bulging bags onto the bedroom floor. They had bought neon-colored sparkly star cups, plates, decorations, and favors.

Sophie tried once again to get her friend to reveal the big party secret. "You told Sarah and her cousin that they could dress up. Is that part of the surprise?"

"Maybe," answered Laura, grinning mischievously. "Like I said before, read your invitation, and you'll find the clue."

Sophie wondered if Sarah and Maggie would find the clue. Thinking of them gave Sophie a sinking feeling.



But Sophie believed that Laura seemed to care more about what she was wearing lately. She wasn't wearing her usual sporty shirts anymore. Even her room had changed—different posters, new bedspread, less pink. And Laura didn't seem nervous about school, either. She was the perfect, popular polar opposite of Sophie and her never-ending worries. *It's "Middle School Misadventures" right here*, Sophie thought.

"Well, I think we've got everything for the party," said Laura. "Do you want to come with me to drop off the invitation at Sarah's house?"

"No, that's all right," Sophie said, perking up a bit. "I should go home and try to crack your secret code."

"Good luck," said Laura. "I can't wait until Friday!"

"Me either," said Sophie.



Sophie had read and re-read the invitation, but she still couldn't figure out what Laura was up to, let alone what she should wear. She decided to take a break and get back to writing her comics. She opened "Middle School Misadventures" and turned to the page where she had left off. It featured a colorful drawing of her character Awesome Girl and her super pet Ferocious Feline. They were radiant in their superhero attire, looking confident and ready to battle whatever challenges came their way in the halls of middle school.

Sophie glanced over at Mister Fur snoozing on the bed, and she giggled as she tried to picture herself and her cat wearing matching super capes and boots.

Suddenly, it all came together. Sophie jumped out of her chair. *I think I finally know what Laura's Superstar party is all about*, she thought as she sat on the bed by Mister Fur. "Who could be more super than a superhero?" Sophie said as she petted her cat. "The best superhero I know is Awesome Girl! She's always rockin' her way through every challenge. I've got to work on my costume." Sophie looked at Mister Fur. "But sorry, girl, no dressing up for you this time."

Sophie turned toward her closet. "Now, what can I use?"



Where Laura's trampoline and swinging bench usually sat, there was now a stage set up with speakers, amplifiers, and lights. A band walked around, busily setting up their instruments. The star decorations were hung from wires overhead, and tree branches were lit with lots of twinkle lights. Sophie looked around in amazement.

Laura came up to Sophie from behind. "Hey, Soph! What do you think?" Laura's megawatt smile melted into a look of confusion as she noticed what Sophie was wearing. At the same time, Sophie surveyed her friend's outfit and felt her stomach drop. Laura was wearing a skirt and a blue T-shirt that said SUPERSTAR across the front. Her hair was up in twists, and her nails were painted with sparkle polish.

She looks like a rock star! Sophie thought in alarm. Then she looked down at herself—the walking comic-book superhero. A superhero. Not a superstar.

Just then, one of the band members walked past the girls. “Wild costume!” she said, glancing at Sophie. Laura smiled weakly. “Um, Sophie, that’s Zoe, the lead singer of Shooting Star. Her younger sister is on my soccer team.” Sophie’s face was blank.

Laura sighed. “Shooting Star is the band from the local college that everyone’s been talking about since the Fourth of July Festival. I have their songs on my iPod.”

Now Sophie remembered hearing about them. She had been visiting her grandparents over the Fourth. And now she even remembered Laura singing a song in the pool last week that went, “It’s time to dream big dreams and show us who you are.” She was probably trying to give Sophie a hint.

Laura’s mom called; “Honey, more guests have arrived!”

Laura and Sophie both turned to see Sarah and Maggie walking through the gate. “Wow, Laura! I figured the party had to do with music, but I can’t believe you got Shooting Star to be here!” said Sarah.

Sarah was dressed in an outfit similar to Laura’s. Maggie was in regular clothes. She stared at Sophie and then burst out laughing.

“What band are you in, Sophie? Alien Planet?” She laughed again, and Sarah laughed, too.

More guests were arriving, and Sophie felt as if all eyes were on her. She turned suddenly and ran inside through the back door.

Laura came after her. “I’m sorry, Sophie. I should have told you what the surprise was.”

“It’s not your fault, Laura. Everyone else was able to figure it out. I just don’t fit in anymore.” All of Sophie’s fears from the last few weeks came to mind. “I don’t really want to go to the new school. I don’t care about clothes. I obviously don’t know anything about music. I’m worried about everything, and I seem to be the only one.”

“No, you’re not,” Laura said. “I’m a little nervous about school, too.”



Suddenly, Laura's mom poked her head in. "Girls, it's time for the band to start," she said. Sophie looked at Laura. "Well, we'd better go out and watch," she said. "But what about your costume?" Laura asked. "Everyone's already seen it," Sophie said. "And anyway, it's starting to get dark."

Shooting Star played a few songs, and the party guests danced and cheered. Even Sophie found herself having a good time. Then Zoe said, "I need someone to come up and sing a song with us!" She scanned the crowd of kids jumping with their arms outstretched. "How about the girl in the awesome superhero costume?" She pointed right at Sophie. "Come on up!"



Glowing with appreciation, Sophie went onstage and took the microphone. The crowd cheered, and she saw Laura waving at her. Zoe told Sophie what to sing, and when the song started, she felt as if she could do just about anything—even survive middle school. ★



activities and puzzles

And here's a trick—three partygoers have no matches.





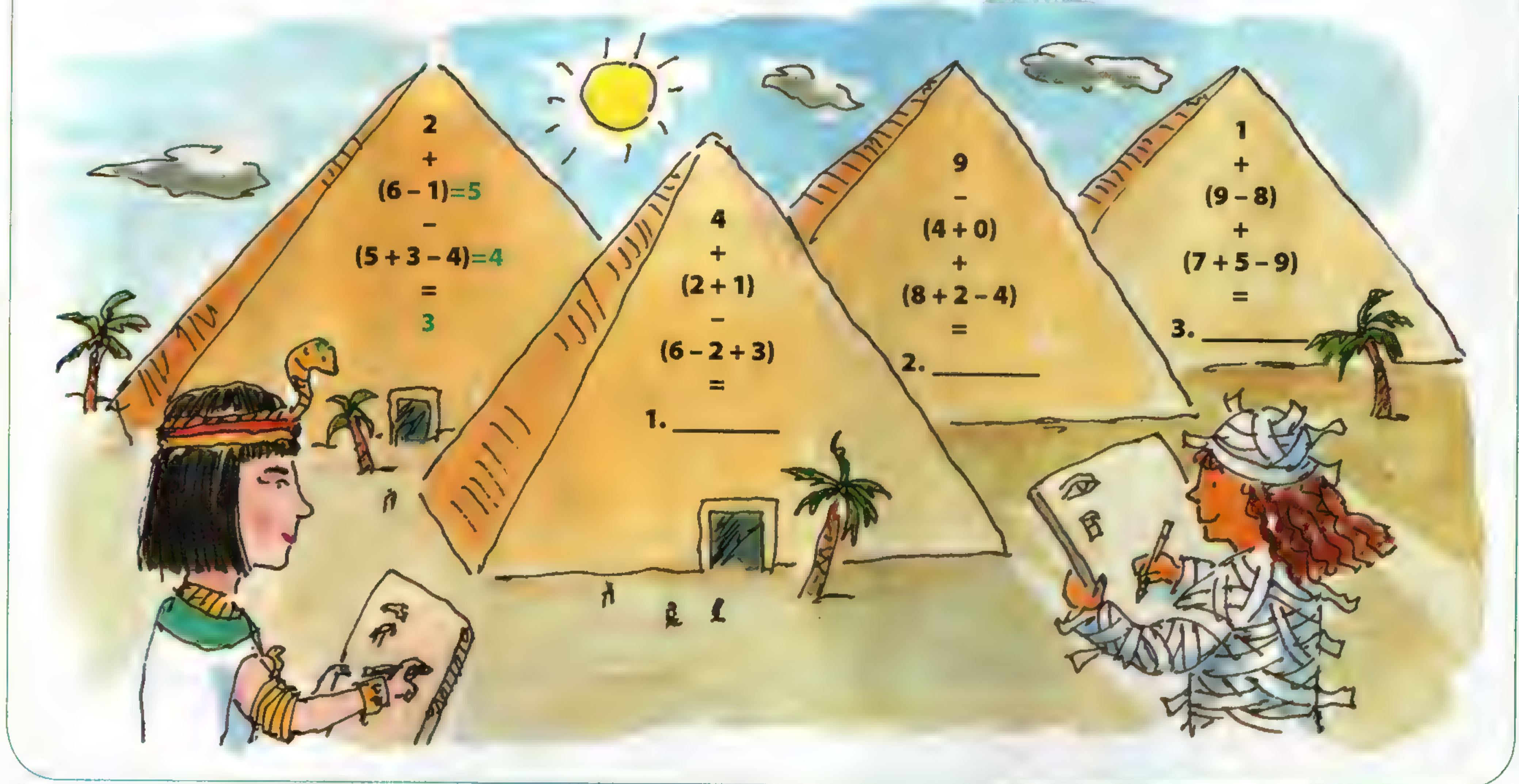
Photo Fun

Sisters Kacey, Kelly, and Julia H. of Connecticut sent us this hair-raising shot. See if you can figure out which spooky hairdo Kelly should have.



Mummy Math

Start at the top of each pyramid. Work your way down and left to right to find the answer. We've done one for you.



Candy Count

How many pieces of Halloween candy did Ally collect while trick-or-treating?



Art Sleuth

Search our pages to find where each snippet of a photo or illustration came from. Write down the page number where you found it.



Trick! One of these images doesn't appear in the magazine at all. Can you tell which one? Write the word "trick" in the blank instead of the missing page number.

What Are You Supposed to Be?

Each of these strange sentences contains a hidden costume idea.

Can you find the Halloween hints? We've done one for you.



Laffateria

What does it sound like when baby ghosts cry?



BOO-hoo, BOO-hoo

Kayla Z.
Age 14, Florida

Why do witches wear hats?



Because even their hair is scary!

Steffi T.
Age 10, Kentucky

What do you call a dachshund born on October 31?



A Hallo-weenie

Sara C.
Age 13, Texas

What is a ghost's favorite dessert?



Boo-berry pie and I-scream

Jessica W.
Age 11, Maryland

Where do ghosts go on vacation?



To Death Valley

Carolyn B.
Age 11, California

Funny Business

Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.



Chin Costumes

Try this silly stunt—you and your friends will fall apart laughing!

1. Check with a parent to be sure it's O.K. to play. One person should lie down with her head on a pillow and pull a stocking cap down over her eyes. The person's upturned chin will become the "face," with an upside-down mouth.

2. Decorate the chin to look like a funny face. Use nontoxic face paints or makeup pencils to draw eyes, a nose, eyebrows, freckles, or whatever else you want.

3. Put on some music and have the person sing along—that's the funniest part! Take a photo. Then switch so that the next person can have a turn. (Don't forget to wash off any paint when you're done.)

Tip: To dress up the "face," add accessories such as hats or glasses from stuffed animals or dolls—or cut them from paper.



Answer Box



What Are You Supposed to Be?
1. spider; 2. bat; 3. cat; 4. ghost
Girls Express
The buzzword, ghastly, is used on page 14.

Mummy Math
1. 0; 2. 11; 3. 5
Candy Count
Ally has 101 pieces of candy. Hope she remembers to brush her teeth!
Art Sleuth
The trick artwork appeared in Help! in our July/August issue.
1. 7; 2. 47; 3. trick; 4. 24.



Photo Fun
Photo C—three streaks and four spiders.

Party Pairs
The pairs are a bowling ball and bowling pin; sun and moon; pencil and notebook; baker and cookie; burger and fries; cop and burglar; birthday cake and candle; dog and bone; bee and flower; and cat and mouse. The pairless guests are a tooth, a princess, and a banana.



Welcome to the
pup-kin Patch!



Photo: Guy Cali/Corbis



Amazing

Bold

Confident

Dazzling

ENERGETIC

FEARLESS

Goofy

Happy

Intelligent

Joyful

Kind

Lively

Memorable

Neat

Optimistic

Playful

Quirky

Real

Special

Thoughtful

Unique

VIBRANT

Warm

Extraordinary

YOUNG

Zany

HELP!

Dear American Girl,

My sister offered to cut my hair. She said she could do it better than the stylist at the salon. When she was done, it was horrible. The layers were thick and uneven, and she cut it short. How will I go to school?

Horrible Haircut

Ask your mom to take you to a hair salon before school starts. A real stylist should be able to even out the layers and make it look better. At school, if someone asks about your new short style, just say you were feeling adventurous. Then think twice the next time your sister offers to "help" you!



Dear American Girl,

I'm going through a hard time, and I need someone to talk to. My mom and I are having some problems, and my friends won't really listen. I've tried writing in a diary, but that doesn't work for me. What should I do?

Need to Talk

Try talking to your mom one more time. Let her know how important



it is for you to talk about what's going on. If that doesn't work, find another adult that you trust. It could be a teacher, a doctor or nurse, a relative, a clergy person, or a counselor at your school. Let the person know that you have some problems you'd like to talk about. Having someone listen and give you advice will make you feel better, so don't put it off.



Dear American Girl,

My teacher thinks that I rush on my homework. I'm trying my hardest, and I don't think I'm rushing. Help!

Rusher

Ask your teacher why she or he thinks you're rushing. Are you making silly mistakes? Is your work

sloppy? Are you careless about reading the instructions? Are you not reviewing your work when you're done? Talking it over will let you know what needs to change. Find out how long assignments should take. If you finish in half the time, you may not be doing your best work. If you still have homework problems, ask your parents for more help.



Dear American Girl,

I get nervous too easily. I didn't introduce myself to any of my friends—they all approached me. When I went back to school after break, I didn't even talk to my friends—they talked to me first. Help me be more outgoing.

Too Nervous

Plan what to say ahead of time, even if it's just, "Hi. How's it going?" Then take a deep breath, smile, and say it. Your friends are going to be glad to see you, right? So don't worry too much. After you've done it a few times, you'll feel more confident and it won't be such a big deal.

MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I'm having a problem in P.E. I'm not a good sports player. I'm scared of the ball. Please help.

Afraid of a Ball

Ask a friend or family member to play catch with you at home. Start with a large, soft ball such as a beach ball, and play until you can throw and catch it quickly. After a few practice sessions of that, try playing with a smaller, harder ball until you get used to it. It will take time and practice, but if you stick with it, in a few weeks you'll forget why you were ever scared in the first place.



Dear American Girl,

Whenever I take a test or a quiz, my friend asks me what score I got. When I tell her, she won't tell me her score. Then she goes and tells all my friends that I'm bragging about my score. What should I do?

Not Bragging!

What this girl's doing is crummy. It sounds as if you're getting better grades than she is. That probably



makes her feel bad, but it doesn't give her the right to be mean. The next time she asks, don't tell her your score. Just say, "I did fine," and change the subject. If she keeps asking, say, "My grades are my business, and I don't want to talk about them." Stand up for yourself, and don't let her do this to you again!



Dear American Girl,

My parents think I spend too much time with my best friend. Every day we hang out at school and talk for an hour after school. My parents think we shouldn't hang out as much, but that's the point of best friends. Right? I don't know what to do.

BFF

Having a best friend doesn't mean you never spend time with anyone else. It's good to have a circle of friends that you can talk to, and that's probably what your parents want for you. Think about joining a team or club, or even just inviting a different girl over once in a while. Your parents will feel better about the time you spend with your best friend, and it'll be good for you to get to know some other people, too.



Advice from You

"When you have a lot of homework deadlines, write up a plan with the time each assignment is due, how many days you have to do it, and how much you need to accomplish each day to get it done. If you stick to your plan, it helps a lot!"

Megan M.
Age 13, Illinois

Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!

American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Abbey C.



Kaitlin G.
and Kelsey S.



These readers drew pictures of costumes that they really wore for Halloween. Go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com to see more Halloween costumes.

Behind the Scenes

It's fall at *American Girl* and we're showing our spirit for Team AG!



The sisters from Photo Fun—and their mom—cut off a total of three-and-a-half feet of hair and donated it to a charity that uses the hair to make wigs for cancer patients.

Kacey



Julia



Kelly

Win a super back-to-school kit. Go to page 2 to find out how to enter.



Go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com to design a pennant and a spirit poster, and to see behind-the-scenes photos of Nickayla on Broadway.

Santa Claws

See the cute and cuddly animal ornaments created by AG readers!



Sweet Dreams

Create a wintry scene from things in your kitchen.



"I love it!"

Girls share unique ways to give thanks.

American Girl

Coming up in the November/December issue

Have a Green Christmas

Great ideas for making Earth-friendly gifts and decorations

An Unlucky Break

Meet a girl who didn't let an accident stand in the way of her dreams.



★ AG's Spirit ★ Stickers

Show your spirit for your favorite team with these stickers.



A	A	A	B	B	C	C	D
D	E	E	E	F	F	G	G
H	H	I	I	I	J	J	K
K	L	L	M	M	N	N	N
O	O	O	P	P	P	Q	Q
R	R	S	S	T	T	U	U
U	V	V	W	W	X	X	X
Y	Y	Z	Z	a	a	a	a
b	b	c	c	c	d	d	e
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k	l	l	m	m	n	n	n
o	o	o	p	p	q	q	r
r	r	s	s	s	t	t	t
u	u	v	v	w	w	x	x
y	y	z	z	z	1	1	1
2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
0	0	0	!	!	!	!	!

5 Great Ways to Use AG's Spirit Stickers:



1

Place these stickers on a binder to show your spirit at school. Go, team!

Add stickers to a spirit poster and give it to a friend.

2



3

Put these stickers on a scrapbook page with photos of your sports team.

Spell out your name on a folder or notebook.

4



5

Decorate a plain picture frame with these stickers. Add a spirited photo of you!

